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Embracing Conflict and Leveraging Strengths

The Power of Self-Awareness in Conflict Management

What is Your Conflict Story?

Take a moment to reflect:

- Do you have your own conflict story?

- What did you learn from it?

- What experiences or beliefs have shaped your views on conflict?

Topics of Discussion

▶ Conflict and the Impact of Unresolved Conflict

▶ The Power of Self- Awareness

▶ Cultivating Self-Awareness for Conflict Resolution

▶ Embracing Conflict through Self-Awareness

▶ Application Discussion and Final Thoughts

The Meaning of Conflict

Definition of Conflict: It is defined as a clash between individuals or groups arising out of a difference in thought process, attitude, understanding, interest, requirement, and even sometimes perception.

- **Context Matters:** Some conflicts can be harmful, while others can lead to positive change or growth.

- **Perception:** Recognize that people's perceptions of conflict can vary widely.

- **Personal Experience:** Difficult experiences with conflict may lead to conflict avoidance while skillful management of conflict may lead to personal growth.
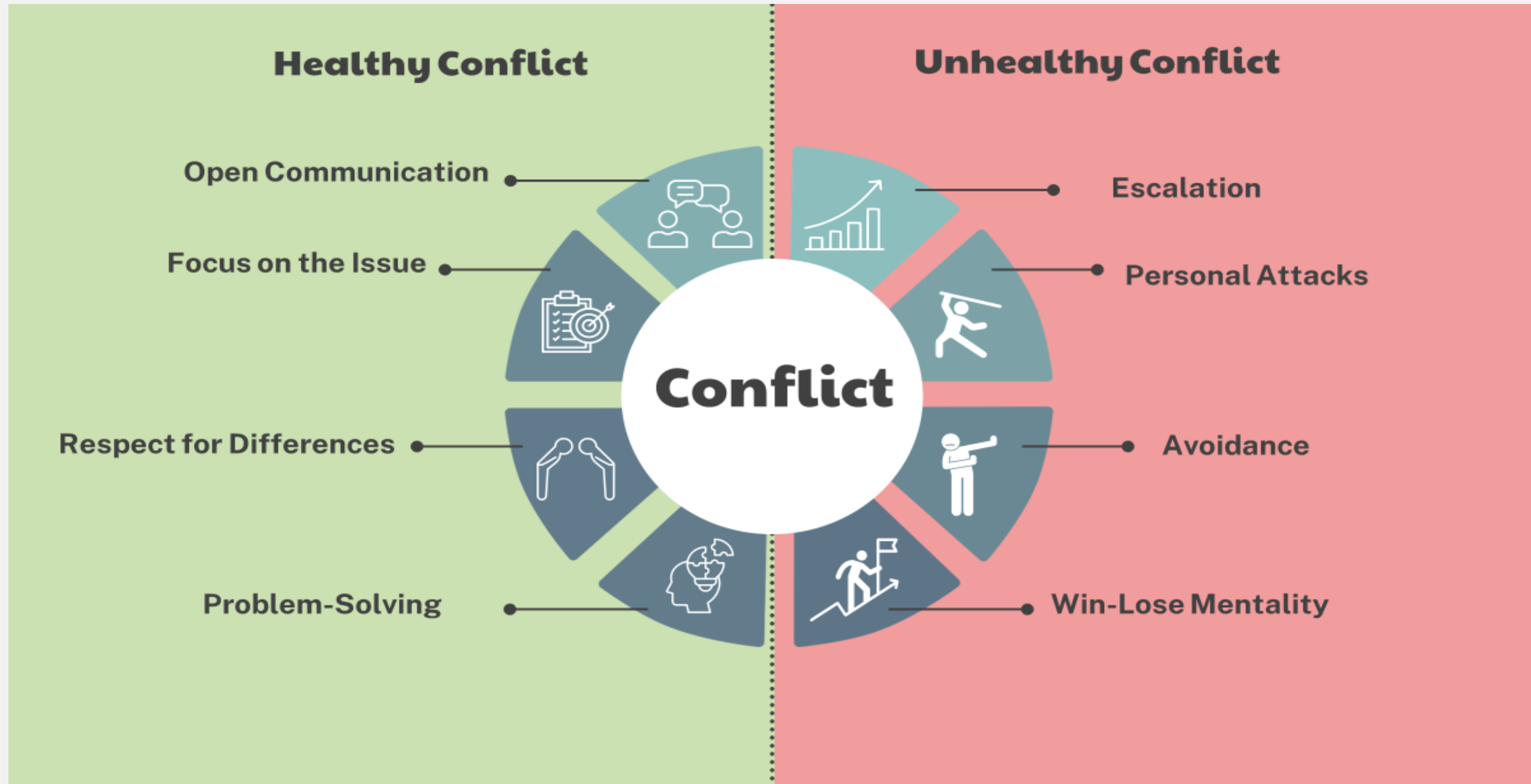
Common Workplace Conflicts

- **Leadership:** Conflicts about leadership styles

- **Work Style:** Conflicts about work styles

- **Creative:** Conflicts about ideas

- **Personality:** Conflicts about values and character

- **Task-Based:** Conflicts about how something is done

Context of Conflict Matters

Consequences of Unhealthy Conflicts

Unhealthy conflicts that are unresolved in the workplace significantly impacts individuals and the organizations or companies.
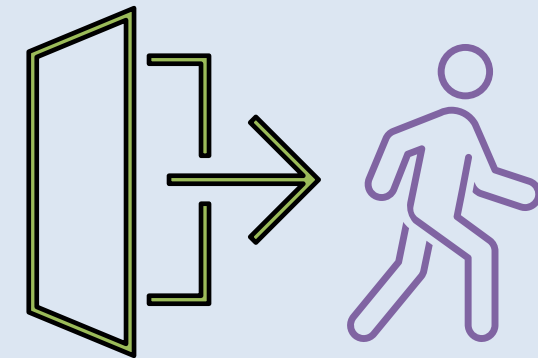

Increased Stress, Anxiety or Depression

Demotivation

Taking Time off as Sickness Absence

Resignation from Role

What is Self-Awareness?

Definition: Eurich defines self-awareness as:

"The ability to see ourselves clearly – to understand who we are, how others see us, and how we fit into the world around us."
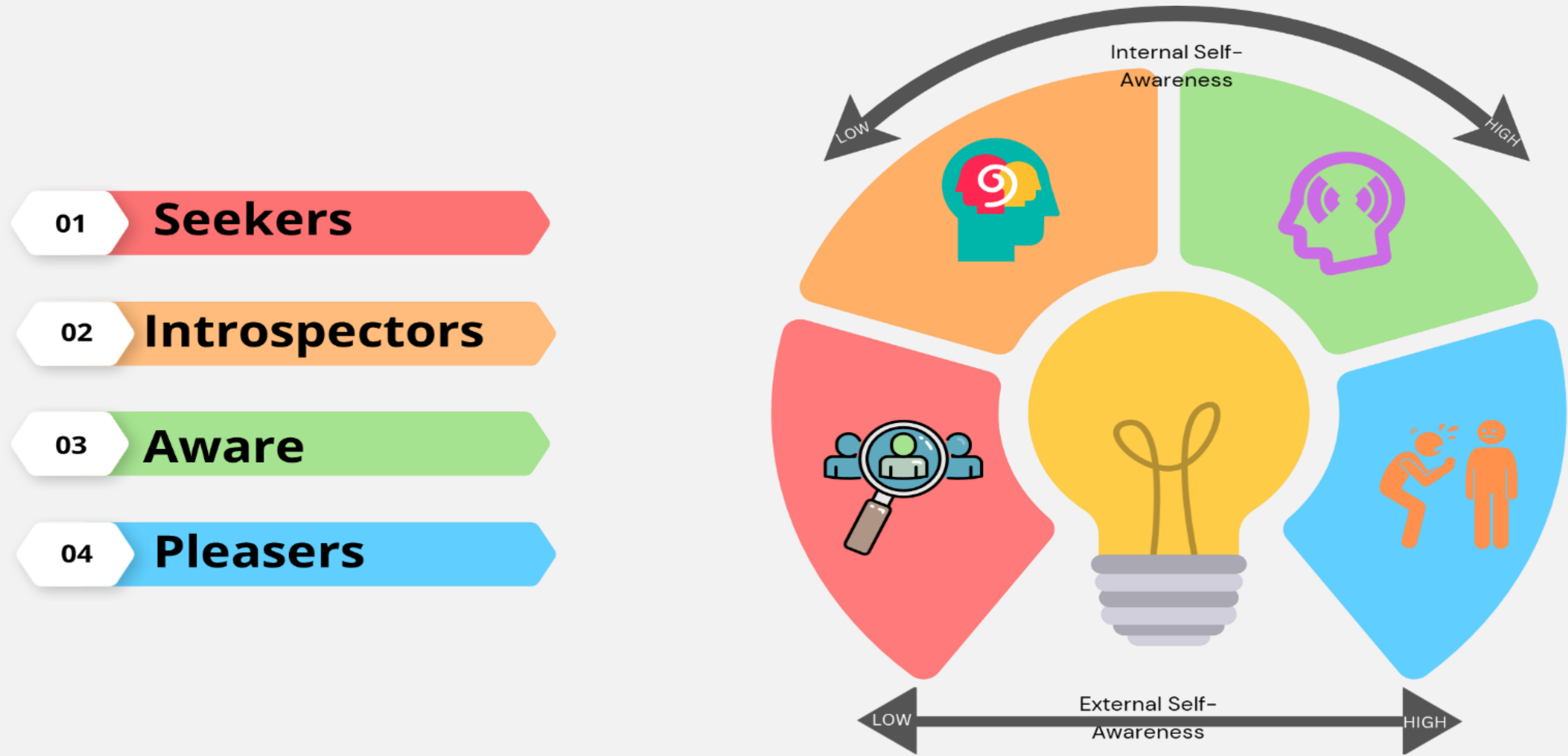
The Power of Self-Awareness

- **Personal Growth:** Catalyst for personal development
- **Enhanced Relationships:** Relate to others with greater empathy, understanding, and authenticity

- **Enhanced Emotional Intelligence:** Foundation of emotional intelligence
- **Improved Communication:** Better understanding one's communication style
- **Effective Conflict Resolution:** Recognize their triggers and biases

Are You Really Self-Aware?

01 **Seekers**

02 **Introspectors**

03 **Aware**

04 **Pleasers**

Internal Self–Awareness

LOW — HIGH

External Self–Awareness

LOW — HIGH

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10

Barriers to Self-Awareness

- **Blind Spots:** Unconscious biases and blind spots
- **Defensiveness:** Defensive when confronted with feedback or criticism
- **Lack of Feedback:** Insufficient feedback from others
- **Emotional Traumas:** Past traumas or unresolved emotional issues
- **Over confidence:** Excessive self-confidence

Self-Awareness in Conflict

- **Conflict Resolution Proficiency**: Explore widely-recognized conflict resolution models such as the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and develop your conflict awareness.

- **Strengths Assessment Tools**: Consider assessment tools like the VIA Character Strengths Survey and Gallup StrengthsFinder.

- **Peer Support and Coaching**: Seek peer support or professional coaching to navigate conflicts.

- **Openness to Feedback**: Actively seek feedback from collogues, team member, and mentors.

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Styles
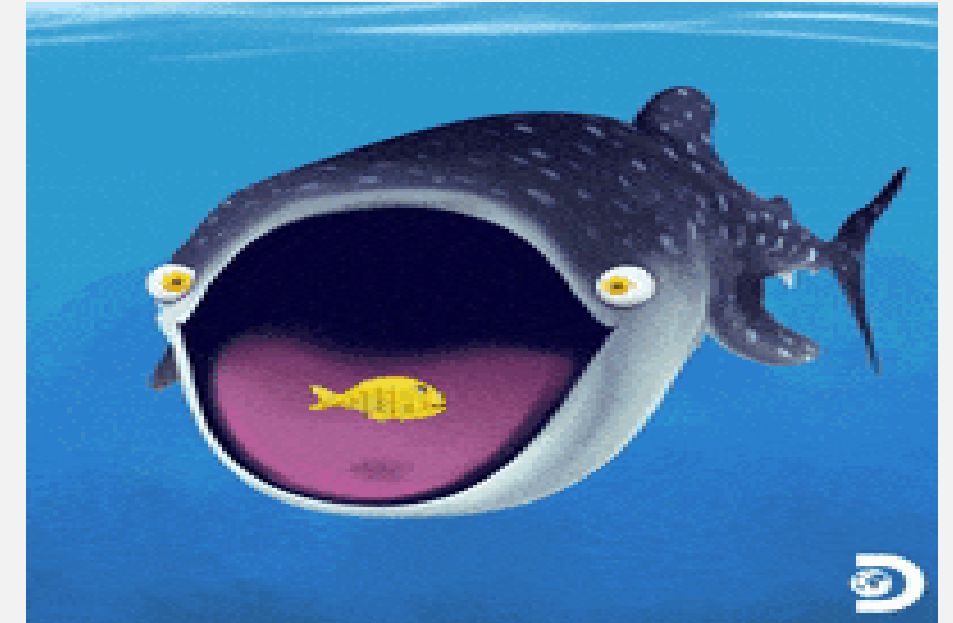

Source: Thomas-Kilmann Instrument

Conflict Style: Competing

Win/Lose

When do you think this approach is appropriate?

- When a quick, decisive action is vital, such as in an emergency
- On important issues where unpopular actions need to be implemented
- On issues vital to the team's success
- When required by upper management
- Against people who take advantage of the non-competitive behavior of others

Conflict Style: Avoiding

Lose/Lose

When do you think this approach is appropriate?

- When an issue is trivial or more important, issues are pressing
- If the potential disruption caused by the conflict would outweigh the benefits of the resolution
- When people need to calm down and regain perspective
- When others are better suited to resolving the conflict more effectively

Conflict Style: Accommodate

Lose/Win

When do you think this approach is appropriate?

- When you are wrong and need to allow a better position to be heard
- When issues are more important to others than yourself
- To strengthen relationships by building social credit
- When harmony and stability are important
- To allow people an opportunity to develop by learning from mistakes

Conflict Style: Collaborating

Win/Win

When do you think this approach is appropriate?

- Finding a solution when the concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised
- To merge insights from people with different perspectives
- To gain commitment by incorporating concerns and reaching a consensus

Conflict Style: Compromise

I think that's fair.

Win/Win (sometimes)

When do you think this approach is appropriate?

- When goals are important but not worth the disruption of a more assertive approach
- When both parties have equal power and are committed to mutually exclusive goals
- To arrive at a temporary settlement on a complex issue
- To quickly arrive at a resolution when under a time crunch, but it's not a crisis/emergency
- When the collaborative approach does not work

Pathway to Conflict Resolution

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Identifying the Issues and Needs	Stick to the Facts (Not Personalities)	Beginning the Conflict Conversation	Gaining Alignment and Brainstorming	Getting to an agreement

Leveraging Character Strengths in Conflict

Character strengths are positive, inherent qualities that reflect an individual's core virtues and values, guiding your thoughts, actions, and interactions.

Reflect on Your Character Strengths

- How can we maximize our potential to manage conflict by channeling our strengths?

- What strengths will help us view conflicts as chances to learn about others?

- Can our strengths help us understand diverse perspectives and motivations?

Strengthen Your Conflict Management

The Four Rs of conflict management:

1. Recognize 2. Respond 3. Resolve 4. Reflect

- Acknowledge both strengths and areas for growth
- Cultivate a balanced view of personal abilities
- Develop humility and authenticity
- Recognize and apply strengths intentionally

Application of Concepts

Scenario: Let's learn more about Sarah's team. The team consists of four members, each with their own unique approach to handling conflicts. Lately, there has been a conflict related to how the team manages its workload and deadlines. The conflict has been affecting team dynamics and project progress. On the next slide you will see descriptions of each team member's actions.

- What behaviors stood out to you as an indication of conflict styles for each team member?

- Given the inferred conflict styles, think about how each member might approach using the 5-step conflict resolution model.

- What character strengths can be inferred and how might they be helpful for resolving this conflict?

Descriptions of each team member :

1. **Tracey:** Tracey is a dedicated team member who values punctuality and adhering to deadlines. They have been frustrated because some team members often arrive late to meetings, and they believe this is impacting the project's timeline. Tracey tends to express their frustrations openly during meetings, sometimes raising their voice.

2. **Alex:** Alex is a diplomatic and helpful team member. He dislikes conflicts and often tries to smooth things over. He has been mediating between team members when conflicts arise, trying to find middle-ground solutions. However, he tends to avoid addressing the root causes of the conflicts.

3. **Chris:** Chris is a competitive team member who likes to assert his ideas and believes that his approach is the most efficient. He has been advocating for stricter deadlines and often interrupts others during discussions to make his points. Chris tends to see conflicts as opportunities to win arguments.

4. **Mia:** Mia is a cooperative and empathetic team member. She values open communication and believes that conflicts can lead to better solutions. She has been actively listening to all team members' concerns and trying to facilitate discussions where everyone's perspective is considered. Mia seeks shared outcomes in conflicts

Application of Concepts

Questions to Consider:

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- Given the inferred conflict styles, think about how each member might approach using the 5-step conflict resolution model.
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Summary and Final Thoughts

- **Pause, Reflect, Leverage Strengths:** Take a moment to pause when a conflict arises. This pause allows you to disengage from immediate emotional reactions and creates space for self-reflection. Consider what strengths will be helpful.

- **Identify Conflict Style and Triggers:** Learn your patterns to help you understand your conflict style(s) and situations, words, or actions that tend to provoke strong emotional responses.

- **Seek Feedback and Different Perspectives:** It is important to seek feedback back from others involved in conflict. Actively listen when receiving this feedback and show empathy.

- **Practice Self-Awareness Activities:** Introduce mindfulness and emotional regulation techniques like journaling and deep breathing.

References and Resources

1) Book: "**Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High**" by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. This book offers practical strategies for handling difficult conversations and resolving conflicts effectively.

2) Article: "**The Power of Positive Framing in Conflict Resolution**" by Peter J. Favaro, Ph.D. This article explores the concept of reframing and how it can be used to shift perspectives and find common ground in conflict situations.

3) Assessments: [VIA Character Strengths Survey](#) – Free to rank your top Five Strengths; [Thomas Kilmann conflict mode Instrument (TKI)](#) – Fee-based and supports individual and team assessment; and [Everything](#) DiSC- Fee-based tool that measures preferences and tendencies and 360 feedback.

4) Book: "**Insight: The surprising truth about how others see us, how we see ourselves, and why the answers matter more than we think**" by Tasha Eurich. This book debunks some myths about self-awareness and is a great resource on how to develop self-awareness for leaders and teams.

5) Website: https://pollackpeacebuilding.com/. This website offers paid workshops and training related to conflict resolution and related free resource materials.

Thank You

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